

### **REMARKS**

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Official Action dated December 13, 2005. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

#### **Status of the Claims**

Claims 7-10 and 12-15 are under consideration in this application. Claims 4-6 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 7-9 and 12-14 are being amended, as set forth above and in the attached marked-up presentation of the claim amendments, in order to more particularly define and distinctly claim Applicants' invention.

All the amendments to the claims are supported by the specification. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

#### **Formality Rejection**

Claims 5-6 were objected to for being of improper dependent form as discussed on pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

As claims 5-6 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, the rejection thus becomes moot.

#### **Allowable Subject Matter**

Claims 12-14 were allowed, and claims 7-10 and 15 would be allowed if rewritten into independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As claim 7 is being rewritten into independent form to include the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims, and claims 8-10 and 15 depend from claim 7, these claims are all in condition for allowance.

#### **Prior Art Rejection**

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Minowa et al. (US Application No. 2003/0221070).

As claim 4 is being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, this rejection thus becomes moot.

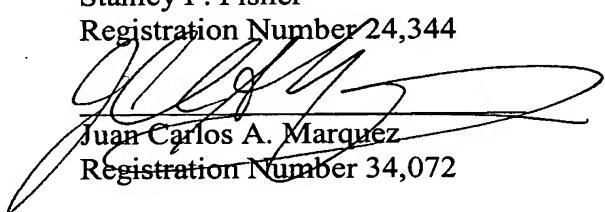
Conclusion

In view of all the above, clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art reference upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely, Applicants respectfully contend that the prior art references cannot anticipate the present invention or render the present invention obvious. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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